

## **Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 124**

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51—Relative to autism spectrum disorders.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 14, 2005.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 51, Perata. Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism.

This measure would establish, until November 30, 2007, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism. The measure would require the commission to report related findings and recommendations to the Governor and to the Legislature no later than September 30, 2007.

WHEREAS, Autism and autism spectrum disorders, or ASD, are neurodevelopmental disorders of unknown etiology that may cause significant impairments in language, communications, social interactions, abnormalities in behaviors, and other physical manifestations; and

WHEREAS, Autism spectrum disorders are abnormalities of brain development and function that are typically diagnosed during the first three years of life, are four times more likely to occur in males than females, and impact all segments of California's population regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors; and

WHEREAS, Autism is the fastest growing serious developmental disability in California. Presently, one out of every 166 children is afflicted with some form of autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS, The State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has established that California's autism caseload increased by 634 percent from 1987 to the end of 2002. In the four years between 1998 and 2002, the total number of persons with autism served by the regional centers had more than doubled and had reached 20,377. Presently, there is a net increase of approximately 3,000 persons with autism added to the DDS service delivery system annually; and

WHEREAS, The percentage increase in the number of individuals with autism who received services from DDS during the first quarter of 2005 more than tripled the percentage increase in the number of individuals for the three other primary types of developmental disability combined; and

WHEREAS, At present, approximately 77 percent of all individuals with autism served by DDS are under the age of 18 years; and

WHEREAS, The State Department of Education reported that in the 1992-93 school year, there were 1,982 students enrolled with autism in grades K-12, while in 2004, the number of students with autism had increased to 21,948; and

WHEREAS, The number of students with autism enrolled in grades K-12 has increased over 1,000 percent during the past 22 years; and

WHEREAS, The State Department of Education reports that nearly every part of California has seen a doubling of the incidence of students with autism in grades K-12 over the past four years alone; and

WHEREAS, The number of students with autism in proportion to the total student enrollment, and also in proportion to students enrolled in special education, has more than quadrupled during the last nine years; and

WHEREAS, The State Department of Education reports that not only are there drastically more K-12 students afflicted with autism, but the students with autism comprise a significantly greater proportion of the special education population; and

WHEREAS, The economic impact of autism in the United States is more than \$90 billion annually and is expected to more than double in the next decade; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism is hereby established to study and investigate issues, including, but not limited to, the early identification and intervention of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Further, the commission shall identify gaps in programs, services, and funding related to the early identification of ASD and provide recommendations to close the identified gaps; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the commission shall identify gaps in programs and services related to the education and treatment of children, adolescents, transitional youth, and adults with autism spectrum disorders. Further, the commission shall provide recommendations for the planning of a comprehensive and integrated continuum of programs, services, and funding that will be required to address the “aging out” of children who comprise the current autism epidemic; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the commission shall consist of 16 members, who shall include eight members appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and eight members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the commission shall be under the direction of a chair, selected from among its members and appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, and a vice chair, selected from among its members and appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the commission shall submit one or more reports to the Legislature and to the Governor, including its findings and recommendations by no later than September 30, 2007; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the commission is authorized to act until November 30, 2007; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the commission shall seek funding, technical assistance, and other resources from foundations and other organizations as long as that support would not pose any conflict of interest and would be deemed as consistent with the goals and objectives of the commission; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the work of the commission may be supported by legislative staff and services as determined by the respective rules committees; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the commission and its members shall have and exercise all the rights, duties, and powers conferred upon commissions and their members by the Joint Rules of the Senate and the Assembly, as they are adopted and amended from time to time, and the pertinent provisions of the Joint Rules shall be applicable to this commission and its members.